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CHANGES IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF THE BULGARIAN

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC AFTER 9 SEPTEMBER 1944

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The great transformation of the political, cultural, and economic life of the country after 9 September 1944 also touched the administrative territorial division of Bulgaria. This is evidenced by the numerous changes in and the reshaping of administrative units.

The establishment in December 1944 of Parnik Okoliya, the establishment in 1945 of Pavlikeni, Topolovgrad, and Tsarevo (now Michurin) Okoliyas, the elimination in 1947 of the then oblast divisions and their replacement with okoliya divisions, the division of the country into okoliyas in 1949, the elimination of Zlatograd Okoliya and the establishment of Madan Okoliya in 1952, the elimination of Godech, Breznik, and Sofia rural okoliyas on 1 January 1956, the establishment of Velingrad, Svoge, and Slivnitsa okoliyas, and the transfer of the seat of Nikopol Okoliya to Gulyantsi village are indications that the administrative change is of a new kind, and is adapting itself increasingly to the changes in the general life of the country.

Establishment and changes in the number of okrugs

On 9 September 1944 the country was found divided into 9 oblasts. In 1947 the oblast division was changed to the okoliya division. Subsequently, however, it was noticed that this kind of division, with its 102 okoliyas directly subordinate to the central

administrative organs, made the functions of leadership and control in certain cases difficult. That is why on 24 September 1949, the Grand People's Assembly voted for a special law whereby the territory of the country was divided into 15 okrugs, e.e., Blagoevgrad, Burgas, Vidin, Vratsa, Gorna Oryakhovitsa, Kolarovgrad, Pleven, Plovdiv, Ruse, Sofia Urban, Sofia Rural, Stalin, Stara Zagora, Khaskovo, and Yambol okrugs.

Thus the okrugs appear as links between the numerous okoliyas and the central organs of the administration, and they help to solve, without any obstacles, quickly, and effectively, all the problems of local and national character. The Vidin and Yambol okrugs were eliminated in 1951, and their okoliyas were added administratively to other okrugs -- those of the first okrug to Vratsa Okrug, and those of the second one were distributed between Burgas and Stara Zagora okrugs.

During the same year the center of Gorna Oryakhovitsa Okrug was transferred to Turnovo city, as a result of which it was renamed Turnovo Okrug. Thus by 1 January 1956, there were 13 okrugs in the country.

Changes in the number of urban okoliyas

On 9 September 1944 Bulgaria had the following 5 urban okoliyas: Vurgas, Varna, Plovdiv, Ruse, and Sofia. In 1947 two more were added -- Pleven and Stara Zagora urban okoliyas -- thus making a total of 7.

In 1952 19 urban okoliyas were established, which increased their number to 26. Alphabetically they are as follows: Asenovgrad, Blagoevgrad, Vidin, Vratsa, Gabrovo, Gorna Oryakhovitsa, Dimitrovgrad, Dimitrovo, Kazanluk, Kolarovgrad, Kyustendil, Lom, Pazardzhik, Sliven, Stanke Dimitrov, Tolbukhin, Turnovo, Khaskovo, and Yambol Urban okoliyas.

Gorna Oryakhovitsa and Lom urban okoliyas were eliminated in 1953. The same year, Kurdzhali Okoliya was established. Thus the number of urban okoliyas decreased to 25.

Changes in the number of urban okoliyas were put to an end with the law of 1955, according to which Asenovgrad, Blagoevgrad, Vidin, Kyustendil, and Stanke Dimitrov urban okoliyas were eliminated. By the same law Malko Turnovo and Michurin city people's soviets were placed directly under the jurisdiction of Burgas Okrug people's soviet, thus becoming urban okoliyas, reporting to an okrug.

Thus after all the changes were accomplished, the number of urban okoliyas in Bulgaria on 1 January 1956 was 22.

It must be noted however, that these urban okoliyas, in terms of area and villages they contained, are far larger than the former ones, since in accordance with the 1955 law, villages were added to almost all of them from the rural okoliyas to which they formerly belonged. Thus Sofia Urban Okoliya increased by over 30 villages, Gabrovo and Tolbukhin by about 20, Dimitrovgrad, Kazanluk, Pleven, Stara Zagora, and Yambol by 10 to 15, etc. However, there were certain urban okoliyas such as Burgas, Pazardzhik, Stalin Khaskovo, and others, which remained unchanged, keeping their old constituent parts.

Changes in the number of rural okoliyas

On 9 September 1944 the number of rural okoliyas was 91.

In December 1944 Pernik Okoliya was established. It was composed of 26 settlements -- one city and 25 villages -- which were taken as follows: from Sofia Rural Okoliya, Pernik city and 15 villages; from Radomir Okoliya, 8 villages; and from Bрезник Okoliya, 2 villages. Thus, the number of rural okoliyas reached 92.

Three other okoliyas were established in 1945. These were (i) Pavlikeni Okoliya with 24 settlements -- one city and 23 villages -- taken as follows: from Turnovo Okoliya, Pavlikeni and 15 villages; from Sevlievo Okoliya, 5 villages; and from Svishtov Okoliya, 3 villages; (ii) Topolovgrad Okoliya with 20 settlements -- one city and 19 villages -- taken as follows: from Elkhovo Okoliya, Topolovgrad city and 12 villages; from Kharmanli Okoliya, 4 villages; from Svilengrad Okoliya, 2 villages; and from Nova Zagora Okoliya, one village; and (iii) Tsarevo Okoliya with 14 settlements -- 2 cities and 12 villages, taken as follows: from Malko Turnovo Okoliya, Akhtopol and Tsarevo cities and 11 villages; and from Burgas Okoliya, one village. Thus the number of these okoliyas increased to 95.

Zlatograd Okoliya was eliminated in 1952. Simultaneously Madan Okoliya was established with 80 settlements -- one city, 18 villages, and 61 hamlets, taken as follows: from Smolyan Okoliya, 54 settlements; from Ardino Okoliya, 17 settlements; and from the former Zlatograd Okoliya, one city and 8 settlements.

In accordance with the 1955 law, 7 okoliyas were eliminated, namely: Brestnik (which was added to Dimitrovo Okoliya), Gabrovo Rural Okoliya (which was added to Gabrovo Urban Okoliya), Godech, Malko Turnovo, Michurin, Plovdiv Rural, and Sofia Rural okoliyas.

Five new okoliyas were established by the same law. Velingrad Okoliya was established on the territory of the southern part of Pazardzhik Okoliya. It consists of one city, 6 villages, and 17 hamlets, or in all 24 settlements, grouped in one city people's soviet and 7 village people's soviets.

First Plovdiv Okoliya was established on the area of the western part of the former Plovdiv Rural Okoliya. It consists of 48 villages and 2 hamlets, or in all 50 settlements, grouped in 29 village soviets.

Second Plovdiv okoliya was established on the area of the eastern part of the former Plovdiv Rural Okoliya. It consists of 54 villages, grouped into 33 village soviets.

Svoge Okoliya was established on the area of the northern part of the former Sofia Rural Okoliya, from which have been taken 9 village soviets with 34 villages; on the territory of the northern part of the former Godech Okoliya, from which were taken 5 village soviets with 23 villages; and Vratsa Okoliya, from which were taken one village soviet with 2 villages. Svoge Okoliya had, at the time of its establishment, 15 village soviets in which were grouped 59 villages.

Slivnitsa Okoliya was established on the territory of the southern part of the former Godech Okoliya, from which were taken 6 village soviets with 44 settlements; and on the western part of the former Sofia Rural Okoliya, from which were taken 6 village soviets with 16 settlements. Slivnitsa Okoliya had, at the time of its establishment, 12 village soviets which included 60 settlements.

Thus by 1 January 1956 there were 93 of these okoliyas.

Administrative division of the Bulgarian People's Republic

After the changes in the administrative division of the Bulgarian People's Republic were accomplished during the period 1944-1955, its territory by 1 January 1956 was divided into 128 administrative units (see the administrative map of the Bulgarian People's Republic). These consist of 13 okrugs (one urban), 22 okoliyas and GNS (Gradski narodni suveti, City People's Soviets) under okrug jurisdiction, and 93 rural okoliyas, as described below.

Blagoevgrad Okrug -- consists of 5 okoliyas: Blagoevgrad, Gotsa Delchev, Petrich, Razlog, and Sandanski.

Burgas Okrug -- consists of 10 okoliyas (3 urban): Aytos, Burgas Urban, Burgas Rural, Grudovo, Elkhovo, Kotel, Malko Turnovo Urban (MTONS), Michurin Urban (MONS), Polyanovgrad, and Pomorie.

Vratsa Okrug -- consists of 10 okoliyas (one urban): Belogradchik, Bela Slatina, Berkovitsa, Vidin, Vratsa Urban, Vratsa Rural, Kula, Lom, Mikhailovgrad, and Orekhovo.

Kolarovgrad Okrug -- consists of 7 okoliyas (one urban): Kolarovgrad Urban, Kolarovgrad Rural, Novi Pazar, Omurtag, Popovo, Preslav, and Turgovishte.

Pleven Okrug -- consists of 8 okoliyas (one urban): Gulyan, Lovech, Lukovit, Pleven Urban, Pleven Rural, Svishtov, Teteven, and Troyan.

Plovdiv Okrug -- consists of 13 okoliyas (2 urban): Asenovgrad, Velingrad, Second Plovdiv Rural, Devin, Levskigrad, Pazardzhik Rural, Panagyurishte Peshtera, Plovdiv Urban, First Plovdiv Rural, Purvomay, and Smolyan.

Ruse Okrug -- consists of 9 okoliyas (one urban): Belene, Dulovo, Isperikh, Kubrat, Razgrad, Ruse Urban, Ruse Rural, Silistra, and Tutrakan.

Sofia Urban Okrug -- consists of only one okoliya: Sofia Urban Okoliya (SGNS), having okrug rank, directly under the central administrative organs (unlike the other urban okoliyas and GNS which are placed under okrugs).

Sofia Rural Okrug -- consists of 13 okoliyas (one urban): Botevgrad, Dimitrovo Urban, Dimitrovo Rural, Elin Penin, Ikhtiman, Kyustendil, Pirdop, Ramodir, Samokov, Svoje, Slivnitsa, Stanke Dimitrov, and Trun.

Stalin Okrug -- consists of 8 okoliyas (2 urban): Balchik, General Toshevo, Provadiya, Stalin Urban, Stalin Rural, Tervel, Tolbukhin Urban, and Tolbukhin Rural.

Stara Zagora Okrug -- consists of 11 okoliyas (4 urban): Kasanluk Urban, Kasanluk Rural, Stara Zagora Urban, Stara Zagora Rural, Topolovgrad, Chirpan, Yambol Urban, Yambol Rural, Nova Zagora, Sliven Urban, and Sliven Rural.

Turnovo Okrug -- consists of 8 okoliyas (2 urban): Gabrovo, Turnovo, Gulyantsi, Gorna Dzhumaya, Dryanovo, Elena, Slivnitsa, and Evlievo, Turnovo Urban, and Turnovo Rural.

Khaskovo Okrug -- consists of 12 okoliyas (3 urban): Ardino, Dimitrovgrad Urban, Ivaylovgrad, Krumovgrad, Kurdshali Urban, Kurdshali Rural, Madan, Momchilgrad, Svilengrad, Kharmanli, Khaskovo Urban and Khaskovo Rural.

A careful comparison of the administrative map included herein with a similar map of before 9 September 1944, will reveal the following differences.

On 9 September 1944, 9 villages were okoliya centers, namely: Ardino, General Toshevo, Godech, Dulovo, Isperrikh, Kubrat, Novoseltai, Sredets, and Tervel villages. In 1949, Kubrat village was declared a city, as a result of which the number of village okoliya centers decreased to 8. In 1952, Madan was declared an okoliya center, but in the following year, the same village was made a city. According to the 1955 law, Godech ceased to be an okoliya center, but 3 other villages became such -- Gulyantsi, Svoje, and Slivnitsa villages. Thus, on 1 January 1956 the number of village okoliya centers was 10.

After 9 September 1944, 15 okrug and okoliya centers (cities and villages) were renamed, namely: Borisovgrad was renamed Pervomay, Varna became Stalin, Gorna Dzhumaya became Blagoevgrad, Dobrich became Tolbukhin, Dupnitsa became first Marek and then Stanke Dimitrov, Karlovo became Levskiograd, Karnobat became Polyanovgrad, Nevrokop became Gotse Delchev, Novoseltai village became Elin Pelin, Pernik became Dimitrovo, Sveti Vrach became Sandanski, Sredets village became Gruevo, Ferdinand became Mikhailovgrad, Tsarevo became Michurin, and Shumen became Kolarovgrad.

Two new Bulgarian cities appeared on the map: Velingrad (formed by the merging of Kamenitsa, Ludzhens, and Chapino villages), and Dimitrovgrad (formed by the merging of Mariyno, Rakovski, and Chernokonyovo villages).

On 9 September 1944, there were 20 cities which were not okoliya centers, namely: Akhtopol, Bansko, Bratsigovo, Vazovgrad, Etropole, Zlatitsa, Kavarna, Kalofer, Klisura, Knesha, Koprivshtitsa, Levski, Lyaskovets, Maritsa, Melnik, Nesebur, Sozopol, Tryavna, Ustovc, and Cherven Bryag. With the establishment of Velingrad and Dimitrovo and their rise to the rank of cities, the number of cities which were not okoliya centers increased to 22. In 1950, the number rose to 23 when Mezdra village was made a city. In 1952, Dimitrovo was established as the center of an urban okoliya, and Zlatograd ceased to be one. In accordance with the 1955 law, Velingrad became an okoliya center, while Breznik and Nikopol ceased to be such. Thus the number of cities which were not okoliya centers by 1 January 1956 was 24.

The Law pertaining to the change in the constituency of certain village soviets, okoliyas, and okrugs in Bulgaria

This law was adopted by the Second People's Assembly at its 12 December 1955 session. It was established with a view to providing greater opportunities for the implementation of the most varied local, okoliya, and okrug planning; cultural and economic enterprises; and for better service to the population on the one hand, and in order to improve the leadership and control exerted by the local state administrative organs and to reduce budget costs, on the other.

The administrative changes envisaged by this law went into effect on 1 January 1956.

The following changes took place in Bulgaria: 7 okoliyas were eliminated; 5 okoliyas were newly established; 5 urban okoliyas were eliminated; one okoliya seats was transferred; 319 village soviets were eliminated; 39 village soviets were newly established; 51 settlements were merged; 33 settled places and hamlets were elevated administratively; there were 11 cases of the administrative transfer of settlements from one okrug into another; there were 50 cases of the transfer of settlements from one to another okoliya within the same okrug; and there were 112 cases of the transfer of settlements from one village soviet into another village soviet within the same okoliya. This law effected a total of 629 administrative changes (the largest number of changes to be made since 9 September 1944 at any one time).

FIGURE CAPTIONS

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Administrative map of the Bulgarian People's Republic.

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|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ★ Capital; | — okrug boundary; |
| ● okrug center; | — okoliya boundary; |
| • okoliya center -- City; |city okoliya boundary; |
| • okoliya center -- village; |changes between 1949-1955; |
| 1 First Plovdiv Okoliya; | 2 Second Plovdiv Okoliya. |